1950

NETHERLANDS

WN 1051/1/G

F.O. minute
H. J. Russell
Dated 9.12.49
Rec'd 27.1.50

Memorandum on the history of Englandspiel for the information of Sir Gladwyn Jebb.

Last Paper
(Z 8370/1051/96) 1949

References
Z 6493/1051/96 1949.

69333

(Print)

(Now disposed of)

(Action completed)

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WW1051/1G

"THE ENGLANDSPIEL"

On September 30th Mr. Shuckburgh submitted for the information of Sir William Strang a memorandum [E 6493.G] recapitulating the history of this sorry botch.

Sir William Strang directed that Sir Gladwyn Jebb should see the file on his return to the office. Since that date, however, the papers have been in constant active circulation: furthermore there have been certain developments of substance. The department has accordingly revised the memorandum and brought it up to date. It is now submitted, for the information of:

Sir G. Jebb.
Mr. Christopher Warner.
Mr. Reilly.

9.12.47

JOHN [illegible]
WESTERN [illegible]

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Memorandum

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Secret

Sir Gladwyn Jebb

Visit of Dr. Donker to London
October 2nd - 11th

Dr. Donker, a Member of the Second Chamber of the Netherlands States General, is the Chairman of the Netherlands Parliamentary Commission of Enquiry into the conduct of the Netherlands Government and Armed Forces during the war.

2. One of the subjects which the Commission is investigating is the so-called "Englandspiel". Briefly this means the failure of certain clandestine operations in Holland which were carried out by S.O.E. and S.I.S. The Germans were able to capture some agents together with their wireless operators and "persuade" them to continue to send messages to the Headquarters in London. By this means they were able to capture agents who were landed subsequently and a small number of these were imprisoned and executed.

3. After the war several Dutch journalists and lawyers published books, pamphlets and articles about this episode. Their main theme was that there had been treachery in London...

London. How, they asked, could captured agents have continued to send wireless messages to London without the controlling authorities being aware of what was happening? They answered this question by saying that of course the controlling authorities were aware, but they continued to send agents knowing that they would be captured on landing, thus deliberately sacrificing them. This in its turn required explanation and several were offered, the most colourful being that Great Britain, having lost her influence in other parts of the world, wished after the war to establish hegemony over Western Europe. In order to do this she would have to eliminate Dutch nationalists and patriots and chose this method in collusion with the enemy. This was England's game: the "Englandspiel".

4. Although Lord Selborne conducted an enquiry into the first phase of these operations, no formal and open investigation of these matters has ever been held in this country.

5. Dr. Donker who has throughout taken a sane and sympathetic view of the whole affair, had been and still is in close touch with Sir Philip Nichols about the Englandspiel.

6. The report of his Commission will undoubtedly have an important influence on Dutch public opinion. Here it should be noted that...

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that the fantastic explanations mentioned above are believed by a large number of Dutchmen. There are also a large number who do not believe them but there are several aspects of the episode which have remained without explanation to this day, and even our best friends in Holland feel slightly uneasy and would like to see the whole affair cleared up once and for all. Since the Commission's report is likely to be accepted as the last word on the subject, it is in our interest to do what we can to ensure that by implication it exonerates S.M.G. of the charges of treachery which have appeared in the less responsible sections of the Dutch press. I should perhaps say that these charges have been entirely ignored by S.M.G., and that no statement whatever has been issued by us. Accordingly but a statement was prepared last year by Mr Reilly's friends and transmitted to the Commission through ~~H.M.~~ Military Attaché at The Hague in December 1948.

7. By the middle of September Dr. Donker had completed his enquiries in the Netherlands. He wished however to ~~hear~~ hear the last link in the chain, in the shape of the evidence of the British officers who had controlled the operations from London.

8. During a visit to London in July, when he interrogated Dutchmen living here, he had called at the Foreign Office and had asked whether he might be put in touch with these officers.

9. After careful consideration and

consultation..

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consultation with Reilly's friends we reached the conclusion that unless we met this request Dr. Donker might suspect us of having something sinister to hide, and that the Commission's report might reflect such doubts.

Accordingly arrangements were made for Dr. Donker to come over, and ten of the officers who were connected with the operations were invited to meet him, first at a small reception, and subsequently either singly or in small groups for more detailed conversations. When Dr. Donker arrived it was immediately plain that his attitude was friendly. He was at pains to explain that the Commission had entirely discarded the more sensational theories which had at one time been circulated in the Netherlands. He was grateful for the assistance already given by His Majesty's Government to the Commission, and in particular for the statement transmitted to the Commission through ~~His Majesty's~~ H. Military Attaché at The Hague, and for the confidence in his discretion shown by His Majesty's Government in sending him a copy of the Selborne Report.

He was anxious however that His Majesty's Government should expand the statement of December 1946, and that it should be given official status.

It soon became apparent that Dr. Donker was concerned only to establish whether there had been any treachery on the part of agents of Dutch nationality, and the extent to which the Dutch authorities in London had been incompetent, negligent or treacherous.

He was <u>not</u> concerned to discover evidence

of...

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of treachery on the part of British officers, nor even primarily to discover why the operations had failed.

14. Dr. Donker held lengthy conversations with the British officers who had been invited to meet him. It is doubtful whether he elicited any new facts from these talks, but he himself remarked that they had served to confirm the conclusions which the Commission had already reached. These may be summarized as

(i) that the highly coloured theories of a sinister British plot were entirely without foundation;

(ii) that the operations had failed, not through treachery either on the part of the agents, or in London, but because the authorities controlling the agents had failed to realize that the Germans had succeeded in penetrating the organisation in the Netherlands.

Before leaving London, Dr. Donker had a meeting with Mr. Mayhew, at which he expressed his satisfaction with the conversations and handed him a letter in which he requested that a revised version of the 1946 Statement should be prepared and made available to the Commission.

15. This has now been done and has been cleared with Mr. Reilly's friends.

16. It will be sent to Sir Philip Nichols, and...

and subject to his views, will be transmitted to Dr. Donker. This statement will eventually be published in the Netherlands, and may be the subject of some comment in the press. I think therefore that you should know something about it.

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WESTERN

1950

WN 1051/1/G

F.O. minute
H. Shuckburgh
TOP SECRET
Dated 28.1.50
Rec'd 30.1.50.

Amendment requested by Mr. Baxter to the memorandum transmitted to the Hague for inclusion in the report of the Netherlands Committee of Inquiry into Indonesia

Last Paper
WN 1051/1G

References
Z 5105/1051/29G
1949

(Minutes)

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Most Urgent

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Sir Philip Nichols rang me up this morning to say that Dr. Donker, having translated into Dutch the memorandum about the Englendspiel which we sent to the Embassy under Mr. Hughes's letter of October last (with the small addition asked for by Dr. Donker), has discovered that he does not like the very last sentence of the document. It refers apparently to some records of conversations with witnesses in the United Kingdom and he is afraid that, if the words go in as they stand, members of the public may ask to see these records. It is therefore proposed that, if we see no objection, the last sentence, or it may be sentences, should read as follows:

> "There is no need here to recapitulate these conversations, of which the salient points are at the disposal of the Commission."

If this is acceptable, Sir Philip Nichols should be rung up this morning.

CAS.

23th January, 1950.

The memorandum referred to must be the one attached to Despatch 597 to The Hague, 14th December 1949. (Earlier pp are in circulation and could not be traced in time.) whose organisation drafted the memorandum, told me that he considered Mr.Donker's amendment an improvement, and indeed it obviously tends to avert publicity.

Accordingly I telephoned to the Ambassador's private secretary at 12 noon and said that we accepted the amendment, the wording of which I repeated.

For convenience I give below the text of the original passage:

/ "There is

[illegible]

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FYI Dept [illegible]

Mr. Skeen [illegible]

3, CB [illegible]

1950

NETHERLANDS

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Last Paper

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References

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TOP SECRET

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[illegible] th June, 1944

My Dear Morrison

I enclose a copy of a letter of the 1st June from Jonkheer van Lidth de Jeude, Minister of War of the Netherlands, together with a copy of my reply of to-day.

This has obviously been a difficult case. I accept the decision arrived at by Sir John Moylan at his meeting on the 13th May to recommend the detention of these two Dutch agents during the special OVERLORD Security period. I also think that S.O.E. was right in asking that if these men were to be detained they should be detained apart from other detainees. I am writing to you because I think you may care to have the case brought to your personal notice as an example of the difficult questions that may arise in connection with the type of detention establishments for special cases. It seems to me unfortunate that men who are only segregated as a precaution should be sent to a prison. I cannot help thinking that it would have been better if they could have been kept in a private house as S.O.E. kept them so long as they were under our charge. I hope that the special reasons for the detention of these two Dutchmen may now be considered to have elapsed.

I am sending a copy of this correspondence to Eden as the Minister responsible for the Security Service. I am advising him that S.O.E. will raise this question immediately with the Security Service.

Yours sincerely,

The Rt. Hon. Herbert Morrison, M.P.,
Home Office,
Whitehall, S.W.1.

to account for happenings that had taken place abroad.

In May, in that atmosphere, which you will remember and understand, the question arose as to the position of DOUMALEIN and USEBAR. The decision, in the circumstances I have mentioned, lay with the Home Secretary advised by the Security Service. It was decided by them that there were unexplained features in the case and, applying the strict canons of security (which, as you know, were applied in other matters) it was decided that until the special security period had elapsed, they should be detained. That decision lay with the authorities responsible for national security. On that basis, their detention took place, under an order made by the Home Secretary on the 22rd May. We asked that they should not be put with other detainees detained for other reasons. I must therefore make it clear that their detention was not judicial in origin or penal in intent. I do, however, appreciate the considerations you have been kind enough to lay before me and in the altered circumstances I am accordingly now asking for a review of their detention. I hope that this may not be long of fulfilment.

I trust that the above explanation makes clear to you the point on which I have satisfied myself that the case has fallen into two phases and arises from two quite different sets of considerations. It must moreover be considered against the background of unwelcome and extensive German success against our joint efforts, which may result in apparent injustice to patriots, which would be the last wish of all of us.

Believe me, my dear Minister,

Yours sincerely,

(Sgd) SALISBURY.

Minister Jonkheer Van Idsinga de Jonge,
Royal Netherlands Government,
Arlington House,
Arlington Street, S.W.1.

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LONDON, June 1st, 1944.

No. X. 80.

Dear Lord Selborne,

I should like to ask you personal attention for the fate of two of my country-men, named DOURLEIN and UBBINK, who were sent out in 1943 as secret agents to Holland by S.O.E., in concert with Colonel de Bruyne.

They were captured there, escaped from prison to Switzerland and arrived here again some time ago. They were interned upon arrival.

Meanwhile a hearing took place and although there is no evidence of any guilt, so far they have not been released. Apparently it is feared that they might commit indiscretions in their bitterness about their experiences. I do not share this fear, as they are both known as absolutely reliable and loyal.

It would be appreciated very much if a second hearing were to be held in the presence of one of the officers of our military intelligence service. Not only would this contribute to obtaining a much clearer picture of the occurrences, but also it would give both men the confidence that they are not left in the lurch by their Dutch chiefs.

I may enclose herewith a copy of a letter of UBBINK to Colonel de Bruyne - a similar letter in Dutch was written by DOURLEIN - from Brixton Prison, where they are detained.

I sincerely believe their detention is not deserved, after what they have gone through and I feel inclined to discontinue the enlisting of agents for this service, as I am afraid that this example will create serious ill-feeling.

You would do me a great favour indeed by reconsidering this case, for which I thank you in anticipation

Yours sincerely,

(Sgd.) Jonkheer O.C.A. van Lidth de Jeude.

TOP SECRET

COPY

Reg. No. 2286 Name: UNBINK, J.

BRIXTON PRISON.

To A.M. de Bruyne,
Colonel Royal Dutch Marines.

Sir,

For the last time I ask your attention in the matter in which Dourlein and I are concerned.

On 27 of May we are arrested and detained in Brixton Prison without any form of trial. I include the detention order which was given to us when we were arrested.

It is clear that we are not trusted. I want to explain that if the people who did this to us got information out of Occupied Country, the information given was given by the Gestapo.

We have nothing done that was not our duty and the people who think that the Germans helped us to come in England, what I suppose they think, then they are mistaken.

I swear by the Mighty God, in whom I believe, that I am not guilty.

This, Sir, you can regard as my oath.

I want you to come in touch with H.M. the Queen and with the highest officers of the Intelligence Service. If this cannot help you I ask you kindly to complain in the House of Lords.

I should like it very much to have an interview with you personal; if this is not possible, I ask you to use your influence to bring us in contact with Intelligence Officers and if this cannot be done, I want you to bring this matter before Court, where I can defend myself.

If the people, who ordered our arrest, think that it is better to separate us from the outside world, then there are places enough outside a prison where I am between walls and bars and I consider it as hurting my feelings of honour to be in the same prison as deserters and criminals.

I ask you, Sir, respectfully but with the utmost pressure to do everything you can do to help us, as Dourlein and I are unable to

/do

do anything at all. I feel that I cannot live longer in these circumstances and I fear to lose my mind very soon.

In the hope that you get cleared the matter quickly, I sign

Respectfully yours,

(Sgd.) J.S. Ubbink.

Lt. ter Zee III S.D.